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| 26263 7590 04/22/2009 SONNENSCHN NATH & ROSENTHAL LLP P.O. BOX 061080 WACKER DRIVE STATION, SEARS TOWER CHICAGO, IL 60606-1080 | | | | |
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/504,813

Applicant(s)

GOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Jonathan Crepeau

Art Unit

1795

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 April 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7, 10, 13 and 17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7, 10, 13 and 17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/IC)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the application prior to the entry of the submission under 37 CFR 1.114 and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the application prior to entry under 37 CFR 1.114. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action after the filing of a request for continued examination and the submission under 37 CFR 1.114. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. Claims 7, 10, 13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Narang et al (U.S. Patent 6,168,885) in view of Schneider et al (U.S. Patent 6,180,281) in view of Gozdz et al (U.S. Patent 5,840,087) in view of Kumeuchi et al (U.S. Patent 6,156,080) in view of Takamiya et al (U.S. Patent 6,150,455) in view of Ichino et al (U.S. Patent 5,858,264).

Regarding claims 7 and 17, In Figure 1 and in column 11, lines 4-12, Narang et al. generally teach a process for making a battery comprising the steps of coating a negative electrode with electrolyte (26), coating a positive electrode with electrolyte (36), and laminating the two electrode/electrolyte sheets together under heat (42) so as to form a single, continuous electrolyte. The electrolyte layers contain a matrix polymer, plasticizer (solvent), and a lithium salt, and are gelled (see column 11, lines 7 and 8). The plasticizer may comprise ethylene carbonate (EC) and dimethylcarbonate (DMC) (see column 10, lines 34-55) and the salt may comprise LiPF_6 , LiBF_4 , and LiAsF_6 , among others (see col. 10, line 23).

Narang et al. do not expressly teach that the electrode/electrolyte sheets are wound and inserted into a film pack prior to heat-treatment, or that the electrolyte layers are formed into a “seamless” layer, as recited in claims 7 and 17. The reference further does not expressly teach that both sides of each electrode are coated with electrolyte (claims 7 and 17), that the electrolyte salt comprises $\text{LiC}_4\text{F}_9\text{SO}_3$ (claims 7 and 17), or the duration of the lamination (claim 10).

The patent of Schneider et al. is generally directed to composite separator and electrode structures comprising seamless interfaces between the separator and electrodes (see abstract).

It is submitted that the artisan would be motivated by the disclosure of Schneider et al. to form the electrolyte layers of Narang et al. into a “seamless” layer. In column 6, line 30 et seq.,

Schneider et al. teach that “the interfaces between the advancing polymer boundaries having merged to lose completely any independent identity. The resulting structure is very pliant, translucent, and smooth, but extraordinarily strong, as shown in the Examples.” The reference further teaches in column 2, line 65 et seq. that “the resultant composite allows ions to freely migrate from the electrode domain through the separator domain during successive charging and discharging of the battery.” Accordingly, these teachings of Schneider et al. would motivate the artisan to form a “seamless” interface between the electrolyte layers of Narang et al. In addition, the patent of Gozdz et al. is taken as further evidence of electrolyte layers being laminated together to form a continuous seamless layer (see col. 6, line 43 of Gozdz).

The patent of Kumeuchi et al. is directed to methods of making electrode assemblies. In claim 47, the reference teaches a process comprising the steps of winding an electrode assembly, inserting the assembly into a bag (film pack), sealing the bag, and simultaneously heating and compressing the wound electrode assembly.

Therefore, the invention as a whole would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made because the artisan would be motivated to use the process of Kumeuchi et al. to manufacture the battery of Narang et al., thereby resulting in the process of claims 7 and 17. In the abstract, Kumeuchi et al. teach the following:

trode sheet deposition. In accordance with the above-mentioned method, it is possible to increase a cell capacity per a unit volume in a prismatic cell, because the electrode sheet can be wound further half turn or a plurality of times. In addition, it is also possible to increase an efficiency in a charging and discharging cycle, because a gap between the electrodes and the insulating sheet is made smaller, and a space in a center of the wound electrode sheet deposition is also made smaller, ensuring uniform reaction in the electrode.

Accordingly, the artisan would be motivated by this disclosure to wind and heat the electrode assembly of Narang et al. according the process of Kumeuchi, thereby rendering the claimed process steps obvious. It is further noted that Kumeuchi et al. teach a heating time of 30 minutes or less in claim 34 of the reference. Such disclosure renders obvious the claimed time of 10 minutes.

Regarding the limitation in claims 7 and 17 that both sides of both electrodes are coated with electrolyte, the artisan would be sufficiently motivated to perform this step with the electrodes of Narang et al. Narang et al. teach at column 11, line 9 that “as many layers as necessary can be laminated together to provide the desired capacity of the final electrochemical cell.” This disclosure clearly indicates that both sides of each electrode may be coated (to result in, for example, a stacked cell configuration). Furthermore, as noted above, the artisan would be sufficiently motivated to use a spirally-wound configuration with the electrodes of Narang et al. In order to achieve such a configuration, the artisan would understand that an electrically insulating material would have to present on both sides of each electrode in order to prevent a short circuit. In view of Narang’s teaching of multi-layer cells above, the coating of electrically insulating, ion-conductive electrolyte material on both sides of each electrode would be an obvious way of eliminating such a short circuit. Accordingly, this limitation would also be rendered obvious to the skilled artisan.

The patent of Takamiya et al. is directed to a thermostable polymer electrolyte gel that is suitable for a lithium battery (see col. 8, line 22). The “preferred” electrolyte salt may comprise $\text{LiC}_4\text{F}_9\text{SO}_3$, among other materials (see col. 8, line 29).

Therefore, it is submitted that the limitation in claims 7 and 17 that the electrolyte comprises $\text{LiC}_4\text{F}_9\text{SO}_3$ would be rendered obvious by this disclosure. All the claimed elements were known in the prior art and one skilled in the art could have combined the elements as claimed by known methods with no change in their respective functions and the combination would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to use the $\text{LiC}_4\text{F}_9\text{SO}_3$ electrolyte salt of Takamiya et al. in the gel electrolyte of Narang et al.

Narang et al. further do not teach that the gelled electrolyte comprises one of the species recited in claims 7 and 17.

The Ichino et al. patent is directed to a polymer gel electrolyte contained in a polytetrafluoroethylene membrane. As disclosed in column 4, line 37 et seq., the polymer of the gel may be made of monomers of alkylene oxides or vinyl alcohol, among others, or a copolymer of acrylonitrile and butadiene.

Therefore, it is submitted that the limitations in claims 7 and 17 reciting the particular electrolyte polymer species would be rendered obvious by this disclosure. All the claimed elements were known in the prior art and one skilled in the art could have combined the elements as claimed by known methods with no change in their respective functions and the combination would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. In particular, the “alkylene oxide” of Ichino et al. renders obvious the claimed polyethylene oxide and polypropylene oxide; the “vinyl alcohol” renders obvious polyvinyl alcohol, and the “copolymer of acrylonitrile and butadiene” renders obvious nitrile-butadiene rubber. In addition, it would further be obvious to incorporate the polytetrafluoroethylene

component of Ichino et al. into the electrolyte of Narang et al., thereby rendering obvious the claimed polytetrafluoroethylene.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed March 16, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicants state that Kumeuchi teaches a heating step to prepare an electrode sheet for a mold, which in combination with the other references, does not render obvious the claimed method. However, as stated in the Advisory Action of March 20, 2009, the heating step cited by Applicants (col. 6 line 44) is not the same heating step relied on by the Office. In fact, at column 10 line 1 et seq., Kumeuchi teaches that the electrode assembly is first inserted into a bag (film pack) and then inserted into a mold where it is further heated and compressed. When combined with Narang, which discloses facing electrolyte layers, this is sufficient to render obvious the claimed method since the electrolyte layers would be joined by the heating step. Further, Applicants argue that their method results in "high energy density and large discharge capacity." However, Kumeuchi teaches in the abstract that his battery has increased cell capacity per unit volume, which is tantamount to increased energy density. Accordingly, using the method of Kumeuchi to manufacture the battery of Narang would have had the predictable result of increasing energy density of the battery of Narang.

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan Crepeau whose telephone number is (571) 272-1299. The examiner can normally be reached Monday-Friday from 9:30 AM - 6:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan, can be reached at (571) 272-1292. The phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 272-1700. Documents may be faxed to the central fax server at (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jonathan Crepeau/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1795
April 21, 2009